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DEPARTMENT OF VISITING NURSING AND SOCIAL WELFARE



IN CHARGE OF
EDNA L. FOLEY, R.N.

[To keep this department up-to-date and helpfully interesting, nurses in social work of every description and superintendents of district nursing associations are asked to put the address of its editor—104 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago—on their mailing files for items, clippings, and annual reports.]

WITH the present spirit of co-operation abroad in the land, it is perhaps not surprising but still very gratifying to a visiting nurse association to receive requests to look up patients from out of town. Two such requests came recently from cities in Ohio to the Visiting Nurse Association of Chicago. One was from the superintendent of a large visiting nurse association, asking that one of its chronic patients, who had the good fortune to visit relatives in Chicago, be booked for a twice-a-week dressing which she could not possibly do herself. About two days after the letter was received, the patient herself telephoned to the office to leave her address and ask for a nurse. The trip was indeed a treat for the little old lady, and she could not have taken it had it not been for the foresight of her local visiting nurse and the work of the visiting nurses in the city of her relatives. The second letter for a nurse came from a laywoman in a town not possessing a visiting nurse association, but she evidently knew what they stand for. Her letter described the plight of a young couple, but recently removed to Chicago, who were expecting an increase in their family very shortly. The young woman was described as an "ignorant young thing" and much in need of instruction. She proved to be a scared little woman, very unprepared for her approaching trial, and most grateful for help and suggestions. Requests for the nurses' services come in daily from many unexpected local sources, but of late years the out-of-town calls have been increasing. By using Miss Waters' directory, nurses can find out about local associations in other cities and thus make sure that their patients are watched in their new homes. This is particularly important in the case of itinerant consumptives, who should not travel from state to state but who cannot be dissuaded from

so doing. Where there is no visiting nurse association, the Health Department should be notified in this class of cases, but with the extension of visiting nursing, we usually find an association in cities large enough to attract our patients.

ITEMS

ILLINOIS.—The Visiting Nurse Association of Chicago has this past summer been in charge of the nine baby tents supported by the Elizabeth McCormick Memorial Fund. These tents are maintained in the congested quarters of the city for the babies who succumb so quickly to the combined effects of the summer's heat and a questionable milk supply. A new system of records and accounting was put into effect and two special nurses were appointed to do follow-up work in the homes of all the babies. The results have been very gratifying, for, in spite of an unusually cool summer, many babies have been very ill. Mrs. M. Pearl Ringland, of the Visiting Nurse Association staff, has been in charge of the tents.

CECILIA EVANS (Mary Thompson Hospital), has resigned from the staff of the Visiting Nurse Association of Chicago to enter the course in Nursing and Health at Teachers' College, Columbia, this fall.

THE UNITED CHARITIES of Chicago has maintained a camp this summer at Joliet, Ill., for pre-tuberculous children. Frances Davenport, of the Municipal Tuberculosis Nurses, has been in charge of the children.

ELLEN PERSONS, social service worker for the Presbyterian Hospital of Chicago, has returned from a long European trip.

THROUGH the efforts of the Women's City Club of Chicago and the Collegiate Alumnae, a vocational bureau for children over fourteen years of age has been investigating, during the past year, the trades open to children. For some months past, the director and her assistant have been trying to fit the children who apply to them into positions that promise a steady means of livelihood in the future. In this way, it is hoped that children will no longer be forced into blind-alley occupations which pay so well for the inexperienced child of fifteen, but mean nothing for the worker of seventeen or eighteen. One of the tuberculosis nurses was able, through this bureau, to get positions that promised very well for several children from families in which there were cases of tuberculosis. To her great disappointment, she found that none of the children seemed to have any sticking qualities after they had worked a few weeks. A special investigation of one case, a boy, the oldest of seven, whose father had tuberculosis, re-

vealed the fact that Patrick was ashamed to return to work, because all the other boys in the office had better clothes and laughed at his. The promise of a new suit helped some, but still Patrick was unwilling to work. Finally he acknowledged that work had no charms for him, because it didn't mean anything but delivering his weekly pay envelope to his mother; it didn't even mean anything better to eat. Patrick's dietary at home consisted of bread and coffee for breakfast, bread and potatoes and tea for supper, with meat occasionally, vegetables almost never. The little cottage was heavily mortgaged and much of the family income went to pay the interest. As the oldest child, Patrick, at fourteen, had been taken from the sixth grade and put to work, patient questioning disclosed that Patrick had held three other jobs since that time and this present one, and the habit of "quitting" had been thoroughly acquired. He never went back to this promising position and is still intermittently engaged at odd times. How much of this inability to stay put is due to his family failings and lack of health and how much of it may be traced to the weakened powers of resistance and determination in the undernourished, adolescent boy, it would be hard to decide; but one lesson may be derived from the story of this failure—to urge upon the parents in our families the value of school work for the boys and girls under sixteen years of age. No one gets into more intimate touch with these families than do the visiting nurses from school and clinic, and while the children are growing up under their frequent, if not daily, supervision, the time is ripe to teach, besides hygiene and simplified food-values, the secret of a happy future life for these little ones—work for which they are well prepared by both school and the home.

CONNECTICUT.—The Hartford Visiting Nurse Association has maintained a day camp for children all summer in a wooded farm, about three minutes' walk from the terminal of the street-car line. The buildings consisted of a pavilion, where the piano was the centre of attraction, a kitchen tent, and a bedroom tent for the workers. Long tables added to the picnic appearance of the grounds, and an attractive brook at the foot of the hill made all sorts of water activities possible. The children arrived early in the morning, bringing their lunches with them, and were sold milk at noon-time at one cent a cup. The camp accommodated forty or more children, who were sent to it daily by the Visiting Nurse Settlement and the College Settlement.

ALICE MACCORMAC, assistant superintendent of the Hartford Visit-

ing Nurse Association, took the summer course at the New York School of Philanthropy this past summer.

SOUTH MANCHESTER BUSINESS MEN'S ASSOCIATION has opened a station for the distribution of pure milk to the babies in their town. Margaret Brennan (Hartford Hospital), is in charge. For the present the station is in the rooms of the open-air school.

THE first annual report of the District Nurse Committee of the Civic League of New Canaan is an interesting account of the development of a new nursing organization. The desire for a visiting nurse was made public in February, 1911, and in June, 1911, Mary A. Webster (New Haven Training School for Nurses), was appointed to the position. The money was first raised by a subscription list, over \$900.00 being received in pledges. During the year three rummage sales were held, and later an emergency fund started by a gift to the Civic League by the New Canaan Players. The work of the first year has surpassed their expectations by so much that an assistant nurse is now needed very much. This report will be very helpful to any town planning to install its first visiting nurse.

RHODE ISLAND.—The third annual report of the Pawtuxet Valley Visiting Nurse Association, Rhode Island, is a record of a steadily increasing field of work. Three nurses are now employed on full time and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company work is carried also. In connection with this, mention is made of the accuracy required in the records for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company. Many visiting nurse associations owe a debt of gratitude to the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company for having introduced a business-like card system and method of reporting cases. The day has passed when all our efforts can be directed toward the care of the sick only, for we must some day render an account of our stewardship. How can we better bridge the space between our patients and our contributors than by putting on paper some of the data which we can collect daily in our travels, or by writing up a few of the many "live" stories with which our brains are filled to overflowing? Visiting nurses have been, and still are, too reticent about their work. It is but fair that these stories, which would help so much in interpreting the poor to their more fortunate neighbors, should be written up, and a new system of records, that enables it to show better what its work really is, will be of great service to any association.